

REVISED CLAIMS SUBMITTED BY THE APPLICANT

- 1) (withdrawn) An apparatus for opening containers (11) with screw-off lids (12), characterized by consisting essentially of a device to clamp the lid (12) by self-clamping by rotation between two walls (2, 4) mounted to face each other, but not parallel, so that the lid (12) is blocked at its periphery, the adherent surface of wall (2) obliging the edge (31) of the lid (12) of the container (11) to roll without sliding in the unscrewing direction, the lid (12) sliding along the other wall (4) until the lid (12) is wedged between the walls, said self-clamping arrangement including the rotation device causing the self-wedging that is driven by a closed-loop belt drive (5) tightened around the container (11) below the lid (12), preferably at the level of the necking (15) under the screw threads (14).
- 2) (withdrawn) An apparatus in conformity with claim 1 characterized by its consisting of :
- a lid-wedging plate (1) held by one hand on the lid (12) to be unscrewed, having on the plate's under surface (30) two walls (2,4), preferably at right angles to the plate (1), and by a flexible ribbon made of supple but adherent material hard to stretch such as a belt (5) of reinforced rubber in the shape of a loop to encircle the container (11), said loop, closed where it is mounted on a winding drum (6), winds around the drum when the drum is pivoted by its firmly-attached operating handle (7) moved by the other hand, said drum pivoting on an axle (25) that is preferably at a right angle to the plate, at the free end (45) of a connecting arm (8) which also pivots on an axle (9) parallel to the axle (25) of the drum (6), on the lid-wedging plate (1), preferably close to the perpendicular surface of the adherent wall (2).

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- 3) (withdrawn) A device according to the preceding claim characterized by having at least one of the lid-blocking walls (2,4) adjustable to vary the spread between the walls to fit various diameters of twist-off lids (12).
- 5 4) (withdrawn) A device according to claim 2 further characterized by a channelling (29) in the lid-wedging plate (1) between the walls (2,4) to allow the belt-winding drum (6) to move closer to small-diameter containers (11) in order to rotate them.
- 10 5) (withdrawn) A device according to claim 2 further characterized by an oblong slot (19) in the connecting arm (8) at the level of at least one of the two axles (9, 25) to vary the distance between the axle (9) of the connecting arm (8) on the lid-wedging plate (1) and the axle (25) of the drum (6).
- 15 6) (withdrawn) A device according to claim 2 further characterized by a connecting arm (8) that is divided into at least two segments (47, 48) jointed to form an elbow in the plane of the lid-wedging plate (1).
- 20 7) (withdrawn) A device according to claim 2 further characterized by a lid-wedging plate (1) with an extension opposite the working zone of the connecting arm (8) to make a handle (33) to hold the device.

- 8) (withdrawn) A device according to claim 2
further characterized by a belt-winding guide (40) on
the drum (6) shaped like a U lying on its side with the
upper side (41) and lower side (42) barely touching the
5 upper surface (43) and lower surface (44) of the drum
(6), said belt-winding drive being mounted preferably
under the free end (45) of the connecting arm (8).
- 9) (withdrawn) A device according to claim 2
further characterized by a stop (39) to halt the
10 operating handle (7) at its starting position, said stop
being integral with the lid-wedging plate (1) or the
connecting arm (8).
- 10) (withdrawn) A device according to claim 2 characterized
by a connecting arm (8) with at
15 least one element to restore the starting position, such
as a traction spring (35) with one end coil attached to
the lid-wedging plate (1) and the other end coil
attached to the connecting arm (8).

- 11) (new) An apparatus for opening containers with screw-off lids, the apparatus comprising :
- a lid-wedging plate held by one hand on the lid to be unscrewed, the lid-wedging plate having on the plate's under surface, two walls, at right angles to the plate, and mounted to face each other at an angle to one another, respectively;
 - a connecting arm having a first end pivotally attached to the plate and a second free end, the plate further comprising an axle at a right angle to the plate;
- the free end of the connecting arm further comprising :
- a winding drum ;
 - a handle operably connected to the winding drum; and,
 - a flexible ribbon forming a loop to encircle the container and mounted to the winding drum, said loop being closed where it is mounted on the winding drum, such that the flexible ribbon is wound up around the drum as it is rotated by the handle while the drum turns on an axle that is at a right angle to the plate at the free end of the connecting arm, where the rotation of the handle causes self-wedging of the lid under the plate as the flexible ribbon tightens around the container below the lid at the level of the necking just below its screw threads.
- 12) (new) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein at least one of the walls is adjustable to vary the spread between the walls to fit various diameters of screw-off lids.
- 13) (withdrawn) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the flexible ribbon is made of reinforced rubber.
- 14) (new) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the lid-wedging plate further comprises an opening between the walls to allow the winding drum to move closer to small-diameter containers in order to rotate them.
- 15) (new) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the first end of the connecting arm has an oblong slot, such that the distance between the axle of the connecting arm on the lid-wedging plate and the drum's axle can be variable by allowing the connecting arm to travel along the oblong slot.

- 16) (new) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the connecting arm is divided into at least two segments joined to form an elbow joint in the plane of the lid-wedging plate.
- 17) (new) The apparatus of claim 16, further comprising a coil spring mounted between the second segment and the lid-wedging plate such that the second segment of the connecting arm is biased to return to a starting position.
- 18) (new) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the lid-wedging plate further includes a handle extending opposite a working zone of the connecting arm, in order to hold the apparatus.
- 19) (new) The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the free end of the connecting arm further includes a belt-winding guide in the form of a U-shaped member that straddles an upper and a lower end of the winding drum.
- 20) (new) The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising a coil spring mounted between the connecting arm and the lid-wedging plate such that the connecting arm is biased to return to a starting position.
- 21) (new) The apparatus of claim 11, further comprising a stop to prevent excessive return rotation of the handle, the stop being integrally mounted to the lid-wedging plate or the connecting arm.